



# Japan rearms at U.S. urging Threatens war vs. China, North Korea, Russia

By Gary Wilson

The radical new defense strategy announced on Dec. 16 by Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida doubles military spending — a five-year, \$320-billion military buildup to secure offensive strike capacity, which is forbidden in Japan's 1947 U.S.-created constitution.

The constitution says that Japan renounces war as a sovereign right and declares that "land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained."

The new defense strategy, intended to counter this constitutional provision directly, was initiated at the urging of Washington. The U.S. is actively militarizing the Pacific region — especially Japan — to target China.

The New York Times praised Japan's remilitarization, saying it met the need for a "more muscular military" aimed at China.

The U.S. ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, said in a statement that "the Prime Minister is making a clear, unambiguous strategic statement about Japan's role as a security provider in the Indo-Pacific."

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said, "We welcome the release of Japan's updated strategy documents ... which reflect Japan's staunch commitment to upholding the international rules-based order and a free and open Indo-Pacific," adding that "we support Japan's decision to acquire new capabilities that strengthen regional deterrence, including counterstrike capabilities."

Japan's Minister of Defense Nobuo Kishi, younger brother of the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, declared last year that Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) should have the right and capability to launch a "preemptive strike" against areas of some neighboring countries.

Salman Rafi Sheikh, a professor of politics at Lahore University in Pakistan, noted that the U.S. empire has instructed both of its two former World War II enemies, Germany and Japan, to rearm:

"Japan's drive to arm itself has an interesting parallel in Europe, where Germany, too, has decided to massively increase its total defense spending to 100 billion euros. With Washington actively supporting these critical changes to establish powerful militaries around its core rival states — Russia and China in Europe and Asia — new forms of conflict are likely to emerge, with prospects of major counter alliances on the horizon, too."

Salman Rafi Sheikh continues: "Japan's increasing defense budget comes on top of the full possibility of 'interoperability' between the U.S. and Japanese units, allowing the latter to 'practice its forward-deployed attack capabilities.' What is extremely important to note here is that the core purpose of the 'interoperability' is not defensive; it is offensive, which means that Japan's so-called 'pacifism' is nothing more than a rhetoric that Tokyo uses — and will continue to use — to mask its rapidly growing military preparedness against Russia and China.

"That this process is being actively supported by the U.S. is evident from Japanese Prime Minister



The Maritime Self-Defense Force ship JS Kurama leads a formation with U.S. guided missile destroyers during a war exercise. The Japanese Self-Defense Force flies the imperial "rising sun" flag rather than the Japanese national flag which is only the red sun on a white field. The rising sun flag is associated with Japanese militarism and imperialism and is seen to be directed particularly at North Korea and China.

Photo: U.S. Navy

Fumio Kishida's announcement, on the sidelines of Biden's Tokyo visit, to 'drastically strengthen' its military capabilities.

"According to a new economic policy draft released by the Kishida administration, the decision is a response to 'attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by forces in East Asia, making regional security increasingly severe.' If this assessment sounds vague, it is by design to camouflage Japan's rise as a new military power that can rival Russia and China as a U.S. ally.

"In fact, it is already acting as a U.S. ally against Russia in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In April, Japanese officials announced that they will send defense equipment — drones and protective gear — to Ukraine to help the Ukrainian military fight the Russian forces.

"While Japan's Self-Defense Forces rules prohibit the transfer of defense products to other countries, Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi justified this transfer as 'commercial' and 'dis-used items.' More self-serving justifications will be invented to mask Japan's so-called 'pacifist militarization.'" [RU](#)

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- Solidarity & anti-war movement
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# Reflections on the passing of Wadiya Jamal

By Gloria Verdieu

When I read the email message from Black Alliance for Peace on Dec. 27 stating Mumia Abu-Jamal’s wife, Wadiya Jamal, had transitioned, I was deeply saddened.

I recovered from my state of shock, reading the many replies expressing love, light, and well-wishes to the family and friends of Wadiya and Mumia. I realized that I had to be strong, stay focused and continue the fight to bring Mumia home.

I grappled with how I was going to spread this news, and just talk to people about this tragedy without breaking the spirit of our fight to release Mumia and all political prisoners. It was a couple of days later when I checked Prison Radio, thinking that Mumia may have written something about Wadiya that I could share. I listened to the commentary below:



“Wadiya Jamal, my beloved.

“She was a spring baby, born in the first week of

April 1953. A West Philly girl whose beauty made her shine in a crowd. She loved fiercely like a lion. This love blessed the lives of five beautiful children, and it blessed me.

“As mother and grandmother, she really shone like a sun over her planet, and when anyone was lost, her mighty love was cracked by such loss—her mother and father, her brother Jimmy, and perhaps deepest, the loss of the family’s baby, Samiya, was the deepest crack, the deepest past.

“After that, every December was a trial through darkness. We were all waiting for the first light of spring, for this dark fog to break. But it was not to be. Just after the holidays, her heart, her mighty heart, gave up. She loved like no one else ever.

“I love you, I will always love you. All the children and grandchildren love you and will always love you. Your smile was the only sunshine we ever needed, and we need it now. We love you, Wa-Wa. We miss you.

“With love, not fear, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.”

How inspiring, how thoughtful. Hearing Mumia’s words turned on a light inside of me. How fortunate it is for me to be a part of this fight to release Mumia. I truly believe this fight is for his release, because Mumia is free. He is the freest person I know, and I know him only through his writings.

I have learned so much from this brother and there is always more to learn. I remembered reading and listening to his commentaries in “Father Hunger” and “Mother Loss” from “All Things Censored.” I recall

the initial sadness, and as I continued reading, I felt some comfort when I thought of my own mother and father in a different way. His commentaries were filled with compassion and love.

Mumia’s commentaries on his sister Lydia Barashango in 2011, and his daughter Samiya Abullah in 2015 (“Samiya makes her Transition” and “The Visit”) had a similar effect on me. Now his wife of over 40 years has made her transition and Mumia is writing words of wisdom, teaching us in his words how we should live our lives and be remembered and loved.

We should live, love and be the best that we can be.

Mumia will be released. We the people will release him.

With love, not fear!

Send Mumia bereavement or condolence cards for the loss of his beloved wife, Wadiya Jamal, to:

Mumia Abu-Jamal  
AM 8335  
Smart Communications/PADOC  
SCI Mahanoy  
PO Box 33028  
St Petersburg, FL 33733

## KING DAY IN LA: For justice, against police terror and U.S. war

By John Parker

Activists from the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Code-Pink, Socialist Unity Party, Young Communist League, Organization US, and community activists joined a street meeting for justice and against police terror and U.S. war along the parade route for MLK Day.

The speakers, including one from Ukraine, demanded an end to U.S. weapons being sent to Ukraine and escalating towards World War III while encouraging more killing in a long war that only benefits the military industry and U.S. imperialism. Participants also pledged to work

towards building a Dr. King parade that honors his legacy next year. The march today by CORE included the Sheriffs and LAPD. The LAPD has recently come under fire from the community for killing three people in less than 24 hours after the start of this year. Between Jan. 2 and Jan. 3, Keenan Anders, Tarak Smith, and Oscar Sanchez were all killed by the LAPD. But that didn’t stop the corporate-financed “Kingdom Day Parade” from showcasing them in the parade as a welcome contingent.

Like the previous year, when the parade was taken over by the community, activists today promised that next year will be different. [R](#)



Los Angeles, Jan. 16.

SLL photo: John Parker

## Taking ‘gaslighting’ to a new level: Gas stoves as a political diversion

By Stephen Millies

News flash from the 1880s: Tom Edison wants to steal your gas and kerosene lamps. The government is trying to force you to buy Edison’s new-fangled electric light bulbs.

Nothing like that happened 140 years ago, of course. Capitalists — such as Wall Street’s biggest banker, J.P. Morgan — saw electricity as something to make profits from.

Utilities were established that sold electric power and rides on electric streetcars. Morgan set up General Electric in 1892.

So why are Fox News and Republican politicians creating such a storm over replacing gas stoves with electric appliances?

It’s estimated that gas stoves are responsible for one out of eight

asthma cases in children. Childhood asthma is primarily a disease among poor working-class families.

Gas stoves are also a source of methane, which is poisonous and contributes to climate change. So why isn’t replacing gas stoves as non-controversial as liking apple pie?

Capitalist commentators often described the wholesale destruction of factory jobs as inevitable. What’s so sacred about gas stoves?

Behind the characters in Congress waging this phony “save gas stoves” campaign — which includes the Democratic senator from West Virginia, Joe Manchin — is Big Gas.

Big Gas is on a roll. Cutting off Russian natural gas supplies from European markets helped send gas prices through the roof.

Sabotaging the Russian/German

Nord Stream gas pipelines under the Baltic Sea was part of this campaign.

Homeowners who heat with gas face a 28% price increase this winter. Again, poor families will suffer most.

Soaring natural gas prices fueled ExxonMobil’s record \$19.7 billion in profits during the third quarter of 2022. That’s almost \$220 million per day.

One of the most prominent players in Big Gas is the Williams Companies. This outfit sought to build a pipeline carrying fracked gas that would have endangered the Black-majority Far Rockaway community in Queens, New York.

Williams has assets of \$48 billion. It moved its headquarters to Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1919. Tulsa was a booming oil city

In 1921, racist white mobs killed hundreds of Black people in Tulsa.

The city’s prosperous Black business district, rich in oil assets — known as “Black Wall Street” — was burned down. The oil assets were stolen.

The Williams Companies not only need to roll back their prices. Williams needs to pay reparations.

### Heat and light are rights!

The billionaire class and their political stooges view the millions of Trump voters as cattle who need to be driven to the polls. So do the talking heads on Fox News.

While rents are skyrocketing and living standards are decreasing, capitalists need phony issues to divert people. Some are openly racist, like the attacks on “critical race theory.” This is really an attempt to stop

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Rights for LGBTQ+ people  
Equality for chosen families  
Respect for youth, elders  
and disabled people

WEBINAR:

SUNDAY

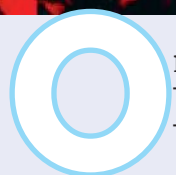
▶ January 22

3 pm Eastern / 2 pm Central /  
12 noon Pacific

# What we can learn from CUBA's 'code of freedom' for families

REGISTRATION LINK

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_1HW2011FR36s--mzdZxwPg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1HW2011FR36s--mzdZxwPg)



On Sunday, Jan. 22, a webinar panel will report on "What we can learn from Cuba's 'code of freedom' for families." The people of socialist Cuba voted by a two-thirds margin for the new Code of Families on Sept. 25. The vote was won after three years of democratic discussion and education at all levels of society.

The new code enshrines in law the rights of LGBTQ+ people and women in marriage and adoption. It changes the fundamental relationship between parents and children to one based on responsibilities and rights. It elevates chosen families to the same status as blood families. It protects the rights and dignity of elders and people with disabilities. It embraces the rights that are being stripped away from people in the U.S. or that we never had at all.

Cuba is under siege from the U.S. blockade, which has been condemned by the United Nations for 30 years, a siege tightened by Trump and now maintained by Biden.

The panel will discuss:

How was Cuba able to accomplish this historic transformation of families while coping with the U.S. blockade against Cuba, which has continued unabated during the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent climate-change catastrophes?

Why is the U.S. media silent about this unprecedented accomplishment?

What can we learn from Cuba's experience building solidarity at a time when rights for LGBTQ+ people, reproductive care, equality for chosen families, as well as respect for youth, elders, and the disabled are under vicious attack by the capitalist class, its political parties and violent white supremacist groups?

**Mariela Castro Espín**, director of Cuba's National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), will present a message in the Webinar panel. Some of the other speakers will include **Berta Joubert-Ceci** for Women In Struggle / Mujeres En Lucha; **Cheryl LaBash**, co-chair of National Network on Cuba; **Gloria Verdieu** from Prisoners Solidarity Committee; **Mahtowin Munro** from United American Indians of New England; **Melinda Butterfield**, a Struggle-La Lucha co-editor; and **Ellie McCrow** from Pratt Workers United. There will be opportunities to address questions to the speakers following the panel presentations.

The webinar is sponsored by Women In Struggle / Mujeres En Lucha, a member of Women's International Democratic Federation.

## Gaslighting

Continued from page 2  
teaching Black history.

All the noise about "saving" gas stoves is no different than the absurd campaign around light bulbs a decade ago. Later, at issue was gradually replacing incandescent light bulbs with more energy-efficient LED lights.

The race-baiting, woman-hating, now fortunately dead radio host Rush Limbaugh told his millions

of listeners that President Obama would steal their light bulbs.

What the Limbaughs and the reactionaries in Congress will never do is attack the profit-hungry gas and electric utilities. Every year, millions of families suffer utility shut offs, which include cutting off water.

Poor families who suffer electric shut offs are forced to use dangerous kerosene heaters and candles. Three children under 5 years old were killed in a 2013 Bronx fire when ConEd shut off the family's electricity, and a candle overturned.

ConEd executives should have been jailed for this crime.

Almost one-tenth of the human race — 775 million people — still lack access to electricity. It took a socialist revolution to bring electricity to all of China's 1.4 billion people.

As late as the mid-1930s, some 90% of farm families in the United States didn't have electricity. The private utility outfits weren't interested.

The working class upsurge in the 1930s included setting up rural electric cooperatives with government loans.

Thomas Edison was a bigot, not a

hero. He used the talents of electrical wizards like Lewis Latimer, an African American, and the Serbian-American Nicola Tesla to become rich.

Tesla, whose name is misused by the union-busting Elon Musk, had been a member of the Socialist Labor Party.

The electrical engineer Charles Steinmetz, who set up the first U.S. research laboratory at General Electric, would have laughed at the gas stove campaign. Steinmetz was a socialist who corresponded with Lenin — the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution — about electrifying Russia. [🔗](#)



# ‘PEOPLE SPEAK OUT TO STOP RACISM, ‘Instead of focusing on Russia, look at the planner

By John Parker

Almost a year ago, on Feb. 15, bombings by Ukraine were 70 bombs per day in the Donbass region. Then, to increase the provocation, it went up 20-fold to 1,400 a day by Feb. 22, with 150,000 Kiev troops at the border of the Donbass region ready to come in and commit genocide – that is undeniable. And the only thing that stopped that genocidal massacre was the Russian intervention that was requested by both Lugansk and Donetsk.

But, despite stopping a massacre — which is kind of important — we’re being told we should condemn Russia because perhaps it unified Europe. Regarding that, Thierry Meyssan — a political consultant for Syria and Libya, so an insider in geopolitics, and founder of the Voltaire Network, a very good news source out of France — wrote an interesting editorial titled The World Order Already Changed in 2022. He writes:

“Everyone is now beginning to think for themselves. We are not yet in the multipolar world that Russia and China are trying to bring about, but we are seeing it being built.

“It all started with the Russian military operation to enforce Security Council Resolution 2202 and protect the entire Ukrainian population from its ‘integral nationalist’ government.”

Why is he saying that? He points to the unity being built, not destroyed.

Well, he goes on to mention the former European colonial African states that now want the Russian army to ensure their security. They reflect the view of much of the world that is fed up with the U.S. war on terrorism that is actually creating and supporting terrorists in their countries when it suits them. They are also concerned about the huge transfer of weapons destined for Ukraine but winding up on shopping sites for terrorists on the dark web, given the level of corruption in Kiev’s government.

And India and Iran are working hard with Russia to build a transport corridor that will allow them to trade despite the U.S. and Western

Talks given at “People Speak Out” at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Harlem, New York, Jan. 13.



John Parker

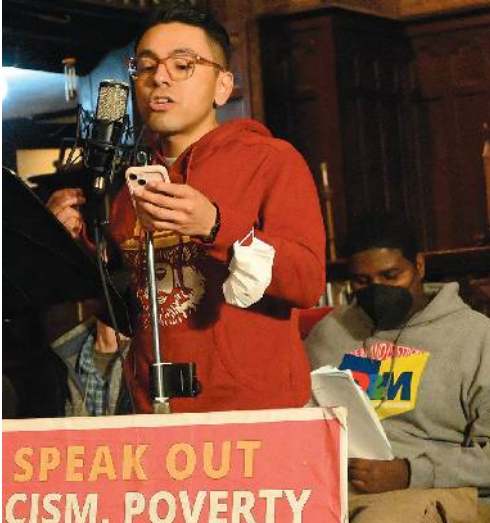
SLL photos: Sharon Black

European illegal economic sanctions. Already Mumbai is connected to Southern Russia and soon to Moscow and St. Petersburg. Beijing is building roads in Eurasia from East to West. None of these relationships are imperialist relationships — they are not exporting capital; they are helping developing countries build up their infrastructure for mutually beneficial economic interests, unlike the financial gangsters of the West — the IMF and World Bank.

See, if the glasses you wear only direct the light into your eyes from Europe, giving a Eurocentric view of the world, you don’t see the Global South. You don’t see that countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia have a different view and collectively can have more of an impact on the world than Europe.

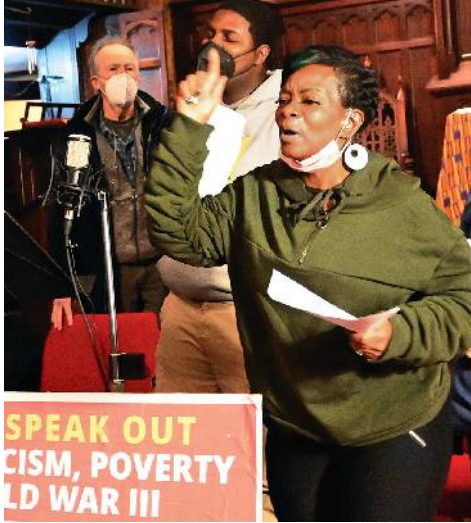
But I don’t want to give the impression that Europe is united either. Back in August, veteran journalist and TV host Saeed Naqvi wrote in the Indian Observer about French President Macron’s leaked conversation displaying anything but unity, but, for once, honesty: He said basically that Western hegemony might be coming to an end to senior French diplomats.

Macron said France, Britain, and the USA contributed to the world in this way: France is culture, England is industry, and the U.S. is war. He then criticized the wrong choices made by a series of U.S. Presidents



Richie Merino

from Clinton on. He also said China and Russia had achieved great success over the years under different leadership styles, then mentioned how China lifted 700 million people out of poverty. But, in France, Macron said, the market economy is



David Clennon, Ellie McCrow and Joyce Butler

increasing income inequality at an unprecedented rate. Ouch.

Macron is no anti-imperialist; he refused to take down statues of colonialists and brags about France’s possession of French Guiana. So, he’s

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## ‘Anti-war movement mus

By Melinda Butterfield

Good evening friends, siblings and comrades.

Tonight I’d like you to join me for a little thought experiment. First, I want you to imagine there’s been a far-right takeover of the U.S. government supported by violent white supremacists. Sadly, that’s pretty easy to imagine these days.

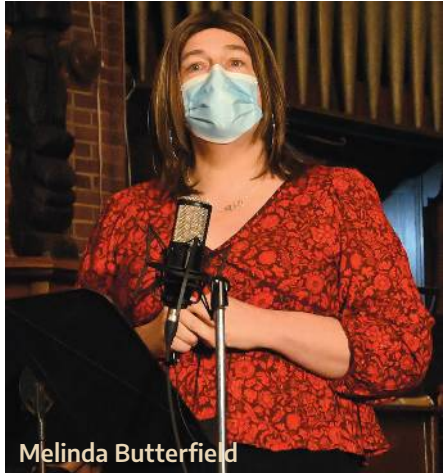
Next, imagine that people all over the country rose up to protest against this coup — Black and white, Latinx, Asian and Indigenous, LGBTQ+, immigrants, prisoners. But just as this anti-fascist movement seems to be gaining strength, a terrible massacre of activists takes place in Philadelphia. The resistance is brutally repressed in most of the U.S. Some people are killed, many are imprisoned, thousands have to flee abroad or risk death.

However, in two states, the anti-fascist movement successfully seizes control and holds it. Let’s say, for the sake of argument, that these states are New York and Connecticut. The new U.S. government sends in troops and tanks, but the community organizes itself and manages to push them back.

A long-term standoff ensues. Many threatened activists from all over the U.S. wind up coming to New York City and Hartford to help strengthen the resistance.

Now imagine this state of affairs continues for nine years. Trade and supplies from the rest of the continental U.S. and Canada are cut off. Hartford, due to its location, is relatively sheltered from attack. But New York City is shelled with artillery from across the Hudson on a daily basis, targeting apartment buildings, schools, hospitals, and houses of worship.

Death squads and armed drones are regularly sent in to infiltrate and carry out attacks on residents. Overseas allies of the regime in Washington send it more and more



SLL photo: Sharon Black

weapons. Over time, the number of federal troops surrounding this anti-fascist enclave grows.

The regime in Washington hates Mexico and is constantly trying to provoke a military conflict with our neighbors to the south (also not a far-fetched scenario). Mexico is the only country that offers support to the anti-fascists in New York and Connecticut. The Mexican government even tries to broker a peace agreement. But despite its promises, Washington keeps bombing New York City, week after week, year after year. According to them, we’re nothing but pawns of the evil Mexican government.

This imaginary scenario is one that I hope will never come to pass. But I asked you to consider it because I want everyone, just for a few minutes, to put yourselves in the shoes of people living in the Donbass, the former eastern regions of Ukraine called Donetsk and Lugansk.

What I just described is reality for people living there since a U.S.-backed coup overthrew Ukraine’s elected government nine years ago, in 2014.

### Life in Donetsk

Let me tell you about a dear friend of mine in Donetsk named Sveta. She’s one of the most courageous people I’ve ever known. Sveta is a socialist, a feminist, and a labor activist who

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Margaret Kimberly, left.

SLL photo: Melinda Butterfield



# POVERTY AND WORLD WAR III'

s of this war'



Omowale Clay and Annie Chambers

SLL photo: Sharon Black

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not cheering on an end of hegemony; he's crying about its end and blaming the U.S. administrations, from Clinton to Biden, for ruining the party.

And did you hear what Biden said

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## Ukrainian anti-fascist: 'Continue telling the truth about what's happening in Donbass'

By Alexey Albu

Message to "People Speak Out to Stop Racism, Poverty and World War III" at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Harlem, New York, on Jan. 13. Albu is a co-ordinator of the Ukrainian Marxist movement Borotba (Struggle) and a survivor of the Odessa massacre on May 2, 2014, when neo-Nazis killed 48 people. He was forced into exile and currently lives in Lugansk.

Thank you for the rally against the war with Russia and China, against imperialism and NATO. I am very grateful to you for continuing to tell the truth about what is happening in the Donbass. It is very important for us that the world will know what is happening here.

In the last two months, the shelling of Donetsk,

in comparison with the summer, has intensified. The neo-Nazis want us to move our artillery. They want to force us to remove it from those areas where their defense became weak. Therefore, the neo-Nazis deliberately bomb civilians. The military actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are bordering on genocide.

But I am sure that everything will change soon. Good news is already coming that in some areas the defenses of the Ukrainian army have been breached. Our comrades are waiting for good news in the coming months.

Please thank all the participants of the rally from the people of Donbass, from all the anti-fascists of Ukraine, and from Borotba.

No pasarán! 🇺🇸

## st be built on foundation of solidarity'

Talk given at "People Speak Out" at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Harlem, New York, Jan. 13.

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grew up in Donbass, but later moved west to Kiev, the Ukrainian capital.

In 2014, after the coup, she had to flee Kiev under threat of arrest or death. Her husband Denis is a Jewish union organizer from Western Ukraine, and if anything, he was in even greater danger. Sveta and Denis settled back in Donetsk and have lived there through years and years of Ukraine's bombing war.

Today, Denis is enlisted in the Donetsk People's Militia to protect the people of Donbass. While some people have fled the bombing by going eastward into Russia, Sveta has stayed in the city to care for her elderly father.

Almost every day, she posts updates on the situation there. Over the past year, they've grown increasingly heartbreaking. Even her incredible inner strength has been ground down to the bone by the unrelenting

Ukrainian attacks on civilians, on her neighbors, on the streets she has to travel for food, medicine, and water. Yes, water, because people have to severely ration water since Ukraine cut off the city's main source.

Every time it seems like there might be an end to this nightmare, a new, more powerful weapons system supplied by the United States and NATO gets into the hands of the neo-Nazi Azov Brigade and other Ukrainian forces north and west of the city. Just yesterday, a grocery warehouse in Donetsk was attacked with NATO-issued weapons, killing a worker and wounding four more.

One of the Ukrainian regime's worst crimes started this past summer. Their army began scattering small landmines called "petals" all over the city. They're about the size of the palm of your hand. They're colored and shaped to look like leaves. If you

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St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Harlem

SLL photo: Melinda Butterfield

## Stop the U.S. war on Donbass, Russia and China!

By Gary Wilson

Anti-war protests were held in more than 50 cities across the U.S. on the week of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday holiday, Jan. 13 to Jan. 22. "Stop the U.S. war on Donbass, Russia & China! Unite to fight racism, fascism & imperialist war," declared the banner carried by the Socialist Unity Party in Times Square, New York City, on Jan. 14.

Hundreds joined the Times Square rally, which ended with a march down Seventh Ave. At the rally, John Parker of the SUP strongly condemned NATO as the most violent, belligerent, aggressive military alliance in history. "Russia is not our enemy. China is not our enemy. Our



enemy is U.S. imperialism, and its attack dog — NATO." (Watch the talk at <https://youtu.be/DZp4sQeZzSc>)

The rally was called by ANSWER and endorsed by more than 30 organizations. 🇺🇸

Marching down Seventh Ave.

SLL photo: Melinda Butterfield



Sharon Black and Joyce Butler.

Photo: Johnnie Stevens



# CAPITALISM’S WAR ON RAILROAD WORKERS

By Stephen Millies

The U.S. Congress imposed a labor agreement on 115,000 railroad workers on December 1, disregarding the vote from four unions to reject it. That is how little real democracy there is in the United States.

The millionaires’ club on Capitol Hill could not even support giving sick days to railroaders chained to round-the-clock work schedules.

Why should a capitalist government running a world empire with hundreds of military bases and a dozen spy agencies intervene in this labor dispute? It involved less than one-thousandth of the workforce.

Aren’t railroads part of the “old economy,” like the factory workers labeled “metal bashers” by The Economist magazine? Haven’t railroaders become obsolete in the so-called information age?

People cannot eat algorithms. The Internet cannot move chemicals, cars or containers off-loaded from ships.

While computerization has destroyed the jobs of thousands of railroad clerks, it has not replaced the need for rail transport. It is the visibility of railroads that has declined.

Outside Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor and a few other places in the United States, passenger trains have virtually disappeared. The loss of millions of manufacturing jobs has also meant the loss of railroad jobs.

Yet deindustrialization, by increasing imports, also demands moving millions of shipping containers from the ports. The delays in the supply chain occurred not only on the docks but also in the railroad yards.

The seven “Class 1” railroads account for 94% of the industry’s revenues.

They are making more profits than ever, helped along by decades of deregulatory policies that began 40 years ago. The Union Pacific and Berkshire Hathaway’s BNSF — which monopolize rail traffic west of Chicago — raked in more than \$12 billion in combined profits last year.

It is the number of rail workers that has fallen like a rock. There were two million workers on the railroads in 1920, accounting for more than 6% of the non-farm workforce.

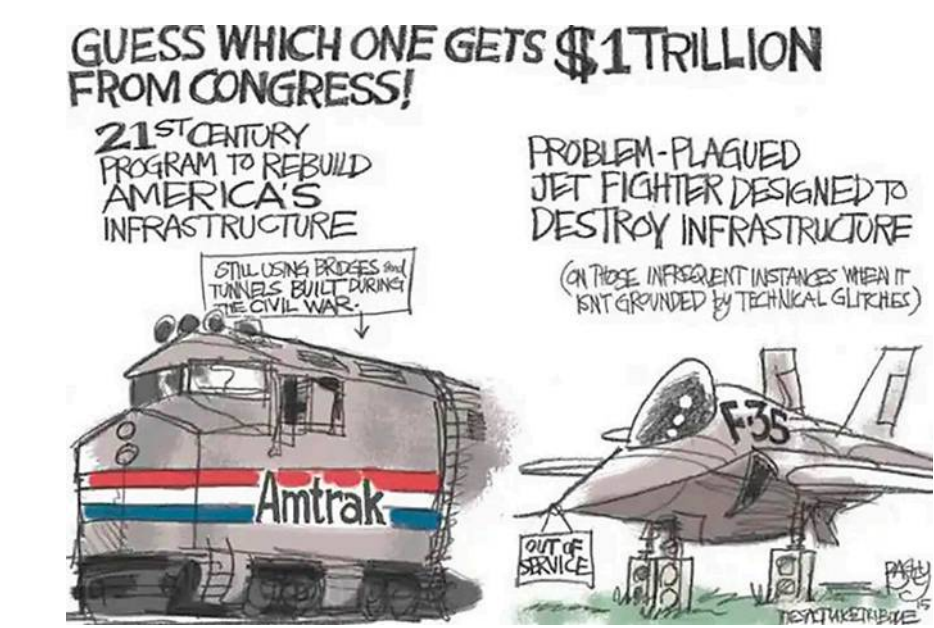
The Great Depression helped reduce railroad employment to 1.5 million workers in 1947. Over the last 75 years, employment plunged 90% to just 147,800 railroaders on the job in November 2022.

That is a smaller number of railroad workers than there were in 1870, one year after the first transcontinental railroad was opened. This shrunken number of railroaders moves a million freight carloads a month and nearly a million containers.

## Racism hurts all poor and working people

The elimination of more than 1.3 million railroad jobs since World War II ravaged communities coast-to-coast. This mass elimination was all the more painful because Black workers and women were finally being hired in many railroad crafts.

Charles Hamilton Houston, Dean of the Howard University Law School and mentor to future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, fought against the industry’s Jim Crow hiring practices.



According to historian William H. Harris, “from 1928 to 1949, not a single Black person found employment on a class 1 railroad as fireman, brakeman, trainman, or yardman.” (The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War)

The loss of railroad jobs was deeply felt in Hamlet, North Carolina. The city was an important junction on the old Seaboard railroad, now part of the CSX system. CSX has a yard in Hamlet, while two Amtrak trains a day stop there.

Because of railroad job cuts, many workers had to seek employment at the non-union, low-wage Imperial Foods plant instead. Twenty-five workers were killed there on September 3, 1991, when a fire broke out.

The plant’s owner, Emmett J. Roe, locked the doors because he thought workers—many of whom were Black—would steal chickens.

White and Black workers died together because of Roe’s racism. Forty-nine children were orphaned.

## Getting rich while workers die

Railroads were the largest U.S. industry of the 19th century and dominated the stock exchanges.

The Vanderbilts, who controlled the New York Central system, became, for a time, the country’s richest family. The Western Hemisphere’s greatest slumlords — the Astors — had millions invested in the Central.

Wall Street’s biggest banker, J.P. Morgan, manipulated railroad systems before and after launching U.S. Steel with a stock swindle.

Andrew Carnegie had been a division superintendent for the Pennsylvania Railroad before he became a steel boss. Carnegie’s first plant — now the last remaining steel mill in Pittsburgh — was named for Pennsylvania Railroad President Edgar Thompson. Most of Carnegie’s customers were railroads buying steel rails or steel bridges.

The Bush family also climbed capitalism’s bloody ladder via railroads. Samuel Prescott Bush was superintendent of motive power for Milwaukee Road.

He became manager of Buckeye Steel Castings, which made railroad wheels in Columbus, Ohio. The outfit was run by Frank Rockefeller, a brother of the world’s first billionaire, John D. Rockefeller.

Samuel Prescott Bush’s son Prescott Bush became a U.S. senator from Connecticut. More importantly, he was a partner in the Brown Broth-

ers Harriman private bank that manages some of the biggest fortunes. The Harriman family controlled the Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, and Illinois Central railroads with more than 30,000 miles of track.

Besides laundering money for Nazi cartels, Prescott Bush was the father and grandfather of war criminals: President George Herbert Walker Bush and President George Walker Bush.

While these families were accumulating their riches, one in nine trainmen was injured in 1909. One in 205 was killed.

The response of the old Interstate Commerce Commission—abolished in 1996 in the name of deregulation—was to stop collecting these embarrassing statistics. (Economic History of the United States by Ernest Bogart)

## Putting workers on a ‘rifle diet’

Workers revolted against these conditions in 1877. Railroad companies cut wages while doubling train size. Today’s Precision Scheduled Railroading has lengthened many trains to two miles or more while getting rid of 62,000 railroaders in seven years.

Pennsylvania Railroad President Thomas Scott declared the strikers should be put on a “rifle diet.” Dozens of workers were killed in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Reading, Pennsylvania.

Black educator Peter Clark, who had been an associate of Frederick Douglass, addressed strikers in Cincinnati. (1877: Year of Violence by Robert V. Bruce)

In that same year, railroad boss Scott helped forge the rotten deal that betrayed Black people by overthrowing the Reconstruction governments in the South.

Eugene Debs led the biggest railroad strike in 1894. The former locomotive fireman and future socialist presidential candidate led the American Railway Union.

In solidarity with striking workers at the Pullman Company, ARU members cut Pullman sleeping cars off from trains. The boycott tied up trains across the country.

President Grover Cleveland sent in U.S. troops to break the strike. General Nelson Miles shot down workers in Blue Island, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago.

The military officer’s had earlier helped capture Geronimo and would later invade Puerto Rico in 1898.

The ARU was an industrial union

that united workers in different crafts. But it did not represent all railroad workers.

By a vote of 112 to 100, ARU delegates refused to allow Black workers to join. To his credit, Debs urged accepting Black workers.

Debs should have resigned instead of leading a Jim Crow outfit. The worst scabbing comes from racism within the labor movement.

Black workers were kept out of railroad unions. They had to form their own labor organizations, as described in Brotherhoods of Color by Eric Arnesen.

The ARU did not even consider organizing Pullman porters. But in 1937, the Pullman Company signed a union contract with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, led by A. Philip Randolph.

The BSCP, with its 18,000 members, helped lead the Black freedom struggle. Randolph organized the March on Washington Movement that forced President Franklin Roosevelt to set up the Fair Employment Practice Committee in 1941.

It was Pullman porter E.D. Nixon who, while going between Montgomery, Alabama, and Chicago three times a week, helped to organize the Montgomery bus boycott. Dr. King praised his work in Stride Toward Freedom.

A. Philip Randolph helped initiate the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Dr. King gave his “I Have a Dream” speech.

One of the ten demands of the march was a \$2 per hour minimum wage. That is worth \$19.39 in November 2022. The labor movement needs to demand a minimum wage of at least \$20 per hour.

## Jilting railroads

So why did the U.S. capitalist class turn its back on railroads? In 1955 only four corporations — AT&T, General Motors, U.S. Steel and Standard Oil of New Jersey — had more assets than the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Richard King Mellon — whose family controlled Alcoa Aluminum, Gulf Oil (and, hence, Kuwait), as well as what became the Bank of New York Mellon — was the most influential PRR director.

Right behind the Pennsy was the New York Central, which collected rent from Park Avenue skyscrapers. Texas oilmen Clint Murchison, Jr., and Sid Richardson backed Robert Young’s takeover of the Central in the 1950s.

The Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads merged on February 1, 1968, to form the world’s largest transportation company. When Penn Central declared insolvency on June 21, 1970, it was the largest bankruptcy until Enron and almost took Goldman Sachs with it.

Railroads lost their monopoly of land transportation to trucks. But that is not the entire story.

The collapse of anthracite coal mining doomed New England railroads. A railroad can’t lose money carrying coal.

Railroads had been such a bonanza that competing capitalists built lines that duplicated each other. Seven railroad companies connected Chicago and Council Bluffs, Iowa. All of them sought to bring freight cars off

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# Over 2 million march, strike against pension cuts

By Gary Wilson

French President Emmanuel Macron's retirement and pension cuts sparked more than 200 mass demonstrations and strikes across France on Jan. 19. Labor unions said more than 2 million people took part nationwide, including 400,000 in Paris. Polls show that 80% of the population opposes the cuts, which would increase the minimum retirement age to 64 with a minimum pay-in period of 43 years.

As Macron pushed the pension cuts, he also announced a major \$448 billion hike in military spending.

Eight major unions had designated Jan. 19 the "first day of strikes and protests" against the cuts. The

unions have announced new strikes and protests for Jan. 31.

France's education ministry said that over 40% of primary school teachers and one-third of high school teachers participated in the strikes, forcing many schools to close their doors for the day.

Public transport was brought to a standstill in Paris, Toulouse, Marseille, Nantes and Nice due to the strikes, and the Eiffel Tower was closed to visitors as the protests spread.

French rail authority SNCF reported a "severe disruption" across the country. "On some rail lines, as few as one in 10 services were operating, while the Paris metro was running a skeleton service," BBC reported. 



Workers gather on Place de la République in Paris, Jan. 19.

## ‘Instead of focusing on Russia, look at the planners of this war’

*Continued from page 5*

when Zelensky was in Washington? In response to a Ukrainian reporter's question about why the U.S. isn't arming Ukraine with even more advanced weaponry, he said: "The idea that we would give Ukraine material that is fundamentally different than is already going there would have a prospect of breaking up NATO and breaking up the European Union and the rest of the world." And, Biden said, "I've spent several hundred hours face-to-face with our European allies and the heads of state of those countries, and making the case as to why it was overwhelmingly in their interest that they continue to support Ukraine." Yikes.

He also said, "They're not looking to go to war with Russia. They're not looking for a third World War."

Biden ended the questions with this: "There's more to say, but I've probably already said too much." Yep, he did.

Now, when you dig even deeper in Europe, you see the tens and maybe now hundreds of thousands demonstrating in Europe against their resources being squandered for a U.S. proxy war in Ukraine and upset about their gas prices and general inflation going up.

See, when we talk about unity, we also can't give the impression that it's just the ruling class dynamics

that matter – more importantly, it's what's going on with the working class, which, like the non-European majority countries on the globe, is potentially much more impactful on our future.

But, perhaps instead of focusing on Russia, folks should look at the planners of this war.

The 2022 National Defense Strategy document from the U.S. Secretary of Defense is worth a look. This document was blessed by President Biden, who is quoted in the introduction.

Right out of the gate, it calls China, Russia, Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea threats to U.S. national security. And this threat must be met by making NATO even more powerful and nuclear-capable, especially surrounding Russia.

But in terms of priorities, China is the number one target. The document even goes so far as to say that the U.S. should begin training and arming Taiwan in asymmetrical warfare (or guerrilla war) against China.

What should we learn from this document and the Pentagon think tank, the Rand Corporation's strategy published four years ago, planning the provocations that started this war? First, it didn't matter what Russia did – the imperialists had a plan of action that was determined to cause war by any means.

But, it's understandable that there

is confusion because censorship by the Pentagon and social media platforms controlled by the State Department keep vital information out.

Sometimes you just have to go there. In the city of Rubizhne in the Donbass region, I arrived at a shelter to interview folks who were housed there to escape the shelling of their apartments by tanks.

In fact, there was a story in one of the only media outlets allowed to exist in Ukraine today – the Euromaidan Press about the shelter in Rubizhne I visited.

The Euromaidan Press is an NGO partly funded by the U.S. intelligence National Democratic Institute and the British Embassy in Kiev and indirectly by the Soros' Open Society Foundation, which funded regime change efforts in Ukraine.

They had a heart-wrenching story about a person's parents killed by Russian soldiers simply for bringing food and water to a shelter where people had escaped attacks by Russian soldiers. So Ukraine created this shelter in Rubizhne to keep people safe.

Well, I visited the shelter in Rubizhne about three weeks after this supposed incident. But, the people there told me they were there because their apartment buildings were being bombed by Ukrainian tanks, not Russian tanks, and while the Ukrainians were bombing them, there were no Russian soldiers on site. And, they said it wasn't the Ukrainian soldiers that provided them shelter; it was the Russian soldiers and the Lugansk Peoples Militia transporting them there and protecting them from the Ukrainian military.

When I first got to Lugansk, I participated in a conference of religious leaders, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian. The topic of discussion was how to defeat the Nazi ideology that was growing exponentially in Ukraine. Why is it growing so fast – well...

Let's suppose that Biden tomorrow erects statues of Hitler's collaborators all over the country, then loans buildings for free to a white supremacist organization to indoctrinate the youth into fascist politics, with libraries filled with books like Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and a gift shop downstairs with cute little keychains with Nazi insignias on them. Then to add icing on the cake he

abolishes every police department in the country and replaces them with the Klan or some other fascist-white supremacist organization.

In that analogy, I am exaggerating not by one iota regarding what is happening in Ukraine today.


I should mention that when I was in Krymskye, also in Donbass, we visited a tuberculosis hospital that had been retrofitted for war by the Ukrainian military. On the wall was a giant swastika painted on it, and next to it, the *sonnenrad*, a symbol appropriated by the Nazis in World War II and used today by the Ukrainian Azov Battalion.

When some people say that Ukraine's Nazi problem is "minor," they callously ignore the 10 Black people killed at the Tops Supermarket in Buffalo, New York, by an 18-year-old white supremacist. He was wearing the emblem of the Azov Battalion – the same *sonnenrad* I saw on the wall in Krymskoye.

This youth said he was inspired by New Zealander Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 Muslims in a mosque. In his manifesto, Tarrant wrote that he was in direct contact with the Azov Battalion and was planning to go to Ukraine for military training.

In 2019, Time Magazine interviewed a former FBI agent who admitted that 17,000 white supremacists worldwide had traveled to Ukraine for military training. Azov and its partners have used some of the billions of dollars Ukraine has received in funding and training from the U.S. since 2014 to build a very successful social media presence aimed at alienated youth.

Things are changing, and we must realize that we can no longer allow the U.S. ruling class the luxury of pushing us over the cliff of poverty, climate disaster, and World War III.

Dr. King said the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today – is my own government. He was certainly talking about the most aggressive, violent military alliance in history – NATO. We have the power to end this war and stop the tens of billions stolen from us to fund a war that does nothing but create death, inflation, and misery. We just need to be clear on who the real enemy is – it's not Russia, and it's not China – it's U.S. imperialism, and imperialism's attack dog – NATO. It's time to put that rabid dog down. Abolish NATO Now! 

## WAR ON RAILROAD WORKERS

*Continued from page 6*

the Union Pacific to the Windy City.

The old Nickel Plate (now part of Norfolk Southern) was built between Chicago and Buffalo to exhort the Vanderbilts into buying it.

Railroads' Achilles heel was what Karl Marx called the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. Surplus value – from which profit is derived – can only be made from exploiting living labor.

The tremendous amount of dead labor invested in railroad tracks, bridges, yards, signal systems, and locomotives became an albatross for capitalism. The capitalist state took over railroads throughout Western Europe.

The profitable railroads in the U.S. west and south needed Penn Central in order to exchange freight with it.

The Sunday New York Times Magazine revealed that legislation creating Conrail – which took over Penn Central – was drafted by the Union Pacific's general counsel's office.

The U.S. government injected billions into Conrail, which was sold in a fire sale to CSX and Norfolk Southern. Conrail's "modernization" included abandoning thousands of miles of track and getting rid of 4,000 block operators in the signal towers.

Deregulation, which includes the 1980 Staggers Act, served as a welcome mat for super-billionaire Warren Buffett to take over the BNSF railroad.

A brutal rationalization reduced Class 1 railroad mileage to fewer than 92,000 miles by 2020.

Thousands of miles are operat-

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# Nuclear fusion hype: A boost for U.S. armaments, not clean energy

By Scott Scheffer

Jennifer Granholm, the U.S. Secretary of Energy, led a press event on Dec. 13 to announce a major scientific breakthrough at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

There, researchers had aimed an array of the world’s most powerful lasers (192 in all) at a tiny pellet for a fraction of a second. This pellet became much hotter than the center of our sun and fused two hydrogen nuclei, beginning a controlled chain reaction.

The process produced about 120% more energy than the energy used to power the lasers. The White House, press departments from important universities, and major media reported it as a giant step toward a solution to the global crisis of climate change.

But the mission of the Lawrence Livermore Lab is and always has been at the service of the Pentagon. The most significant part of its usable budget is for testing, maintaining, and improving U.S. nuclear missiles. The coverage of the “fusion breakthrough” was the ultimate exercise in greenwashing the continuing menace of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile. It was a bait-and-switch con that concealed military research by dressing it up as clean energy research.

The New York Times quoted the White House Science Adviser, who referred to the event as “a scientific milestone achieved, and a road ahead to the possibilities for clean energy.” The San Francisco Chronicle’s headline was “Bay Area national lab to an-

nounce major breakthrough in quest for carbon-free energy.” The science writer for Forbes Magazine wrote, “This would be a key turning point in the decades-long quest to produce energy ... without the carbon emissions from fossil fuels or radioactive waste.” Others followed suit.

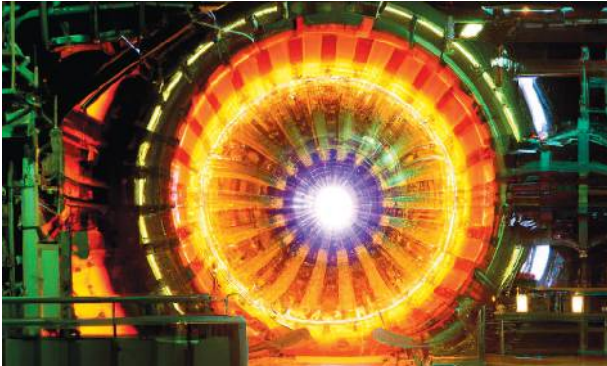
The Department of Energy is a favored hiding place for Pentagon spending. The National Nuclear Security Administration, the biggest of five DOE sub-components with a \$24 billion budget, ran the fusion experiment. The Livermore lab was opened in 1952 at the urging of Ernest Lawrence and Edward Teller, the real-life Dr. Strangelove, the “father of the hydrogen bomb.”

Livermore Lab was founded during the failed U.S. attempt to destroy North Korea, while U.S. General Douglas MacArthur pushed for a nuclear attack on China.

All of this should be known to those writers who falsified what the December fusion experiment was about. The false coverage was no mistake. The articles were all written by people who know their history and science.

Even if they knew nothing about the lab’s relationship to the Pentagon, all they had to do was watch the Energy Department’s two-hour press event to understand the character of the experiment.

During the first section, beginning with Granholm’s opening remarks and then a series of officials, all of their titles spoke to the mili-



tary character; the Undersecretary for Nuclear Security, the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, and others all gave presentations.

### About maintaining the nuclear arsenal

Clean energy was barely mentioned. However, maintaining the U.S. nuclear arsenal was bandied about quite a bit.

Next came a panel of scientists moderated by the Lab’s Program Director for Weapons Physics and Design. Of the six panelists who spoke, only one – Tammy Ma of the Lawrence Livermore Institutional Initiative in Inertial Fusion Energy – mentioned clean energy. Ma spoke passionately about the possibilities of limitless energy with no radioactive waste and no fossil fuel.

If Tammy Ma’s passion is real, then her expertise would be better used elsewhere. Lawrence Livermore is not the only place where work is being conducted. A project called International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) began as a cooperative enterprise between the U.S., Japan, and the Soviet Union in 1985.

Currently, 35 countries, including the U.S., China, and Russia, are par-

ticipating. But over the years, the U.S. role in ITER has been checkered with threats to withdraw and weak funding. Research into fusion energy shouldn’t be abandoned, but the urgency of the climate change crisis demands that all scientific and engineering efforts must be made outside the influence of U.S. militarism. The Pentagon – a menace to the entire world and a major contributor to global warming – should be abolished.

Many scientists exposed the true character of the experiment in the days that followed the initial press coverage. But that was all confined to bulletins, and scientific journals generally read only by their communities. Most still believe that although the scientific achievement in December is incredibly significant, clean energy from nuclear fusion still faces too many hurdles to consider it the silver bullet.

International cooperation is the best hope for humanity’s challenge of putting greenhouse gases and the resulting global climate change crisis in check. But the U.S. ruling class is competitive with its allies and hostile and antagonistic to the rest of the world. Billions of people rely on the world’s scientists and engineers to figure out a solution. The technology of those advanced lasers at Lawrence Livermore, those brilliant minds that made this milestone possible, and those billions of dollars used must be at the disposal of the entire world’s fusion scientists and engineers in an honest endeavor to heal the earth’s atmosphere. [📄](#)

## Charlene Mitchell presente!

By Lallan Schoenstein

Charlene Mitchell, an extraordinary African American leader, died on Dec. 14 in New York City. She was 92 years old. The story of her life’s achievements evokes profound respect.

The daughter of a trade unionist, Mitchell joined the Communist Party USA in 1946 when she was only 16 years old. She quickly rose to leadership while the party was under attack by the McCarthy witch hunt, becoming the youngest member of the party’s national committee in 1958.

In the 1960s, she founded the all-Black chapter of the Che-Lumumba Club in Los Angeles. They chose the names of Che Guevara and Patrice Lumumba to show their internationalist view. She was among the first in the U.S. to initiate a movement against apartheid and to fight for the freedom of Nelson Mandela.

Charlene Mitchell became the first Black woman to run for president of the U.S. when she was 38. She was nominated at a Communist Party convention in 1968 under a banner that read: “Black and White Unite to Fight Racism – Poverty – War!”

When Angela Davis was arrested in 1970, Mitchell led her defense committee with the demand, “Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners.”



Mitchell went on to create the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (NAARPR). She said, “Lead our people not in their frustration, but lead them out of it.”

In a tribute, Frank Chapman — the current executive director of NAARPR — wrote in Fight Back News: “Every time we organize the fight to free a political prisoner; every time we organize a fight against police crimes and police brutality and murder; every time we work with families who have lost loved ones; with families who still have loved ones that are languishing in prison; every time we do this here and now, we pay tribute to Charlene Mitchell, who started this fight for us almost five decades ago.” [📄](#)

## Solidarity & anti-war movements

Continued from page 5

step on one, you may die, but you’re pretty much guaranteed to be left maimed and disabled. The majority of those who have fallen victim have been seniors or emergency workers, and some children too. As of Dec. 21, there were 87 victims of the petals.

### Solidarity is essential

The countdown to World War III started long before Russia intervened to protect Donbass last February. People in Donetsk and Lugansk, like the people of Yemen and Palestine, and North Africa, are guinea pigs for testing U.S. weapons. In the event of a nuclear exchange, they will be the first to die. The avowed policy of the Ukrainian government since 2014 has been to “take back” the region and “cleanse” it of the majority Russian-speaking population. The guiding hand behind all of this has been the U.S. government – under both Democrats and Republicans.

Building a true anti-war movement here starts with poor and working people recognizing that it is not in our interests – that the \$113 billion spent on the U.S. proxy war in Ukraine last year alone is money stolen from our pockets, money that’s desperately needed to address the crises of inflation, home-

lessness, poverty, lack of health care and climate catastrophe.

We have our own battles to fight right here, against poverty, against racist police killings, which were the highest ever recorded last year, against the terrible attacks on voting rights, women’s reproductive freedom, and the right of transgender people like me just to exist.

But to be effective, the anti-war movement must be built on a foundation of solidarity with the people directly affected. And those residents of Donbass and exiled Ukrainians have been completely written out of the U.S. narrative about the war and sadly, also by many existing anti-war groups.

Solidarity isn’t a one-way street. Earlier generations learned so much from the struggles of people in Vietnam, Central America, and Iraq. Today, when organized fascist groups are growing more threatening in this country, we need to learn from the people of Donbass and their nearly-decade-long resistance to fascism.

Because, to paraphrase the powerful words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the bombs dropped abroad also explode here at home – they destroy the dream and possibility of a decent life.

Thank you. [📄](#)



# Zelensky complicit in corporate takeover of Ukraine: ‘It’s an investment’

By John Parker

“Your money is not charity, it’s an investment.” That’s what Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his address to the U.S. Congress while visiting Washington on Dec. 21.

He came asking for more billions to add to the more than \$68 billion in war funding in 2022 alone. Two days later, Congress approved \$45 billion in additional aid to Ukraine, bringing the total for 2022 to \$113 billion.

Washington’s spigot has been pumping U.S. dollars into Ukraine since before 2004 to fund imperialist regime change. This plan accelerated, with increasing violence and tens of billions in U.S. dollars, culminating with the coup in 2014.

The coup was orchestrated by Washington and used to select the future leadership of Ukraine, from that moment on destroying a once-sovereign country and replacing it with consecutive regimes of anti-Russian, pro-U.S. governments that were more than willing to honor the wishes of their U.S. masters: provoking war with Russia.

Zelensky’s statement about “an investment” must be seen in the context of the foreign investments that got a green light to sideline and impoverish the Ukrainian population after the coup in 2014. Some of those foreign investors were active shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union as well.

## BlackRock steps in

The trajectory of the latest vampiric deals of the foreign investors were set in November when Zelensky signed over even more of his country’s sovereignty to a U.S. firm

that will help broker the deals of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and independent foreign investors.

BlackRock Financial Markets Advisory and the Ukrainian Ministry of Economy signed a memorandum of understanding in November. According to President Zelensky’s official website: “In accordance with the preliminary agreements struck earlier this year between the Head of State and Larry Fink, the BlackRock team has been working for several months on a project to advise the Ukrainian government on how to structure the country’s reconstruction funds.

“Volodymyr Zelensky and Larry Fink agreed to focus in the near term on coordinating the efforts of all potential investors and participants in the reconstruction of our country, channeling investment into the most relevant and impactful sectors of the Ukrainian economy.”

The stage was set for BlackRock by the IMF back in 2013 with a deal to “integrate” Ukraine into the European Union, to facilitate greater control and ownership over Ukraine’s resources. In fact, this desire led to the ousting of former President Viktor Yanukovich during the 2014 coup.

In December 2014, the Oakland Institute issued a report titled “The Corporate Takeover of Ukrainian Agriculture,” showing how Yanukovich’s rejection of this proposal led to the coup which ousted him:

“A major factor in the crisis,” the report states, “that led to deadly protests and eventually President Yanukovich’s removal from office, was his rejection of an EU Association agreement that would have further opened trade and integrated

Ukraine with the EU. The agreement was tied to a \$17 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. Instead of the EU and IMF deal, Yanukovich chose a Russian aid package worth \$15 billion plus a 33% discount on Russian natural gas ... This deal has since gone off the table with the pro-EU interim government accepting the new multimillion dollar IMF package in May 2014.”

The report exposed the austerity clauses in the rejected EU trade deal, facilitating not only control over Ukraine’s resources, but also opening Ukraine up to the cultivation of genetically modified crops.

The report continues: “In ‘Walking on the West Side: The World Bank and the IMF in the Ukraine Conflict,’ a report released in July 2014, the Oakland Institute exposed how international financial institutions swooped in on the heels of the political upheaval in Ukraine to deregulate and throw open the nation’s vast agricultural sector to foreign corporations.

“This fact sheet provides details on the transnational agribusinesses that are increasingly investing in Ukraine, including Monsanto, Cargill, and DuPont, and how corporations are taking over all aspects of Ukraine’s agricultural system. This includes circumventing land moratoriums, investing in seed and input production facilities, and acquiring commodity production, processing, and transportation facilities.”

## Selling off land to agribusiness

After the 2014 coup, cabinet positions were literally assigned by the U.S. State Department. Any legislation protecting the sovereignty of Ukraine economically from foreign takeover was set for destruction, replaced

by proposed laws that would allow greater foreign ownership of land.

However, even before the moratorium on land sales could be changed, various loopholes were exploited by foreign agricultural entities. Since the sales prohibition only applied to the land, investors could build foreign-owned factories on leased land and hold it until the moratorium expired.

For example, in March 2014 – just weeks after President Yanukovich was deposed – agribusiness giant Monsanto invested \$140 million in building a new seed plant. DuPont, in September 2014, completed the extension of its seed facility.

Ukraine is a big prize for the imperialists. It was once known as the “breadbasket of Europe” with over 74 million acres of uncharacteristically fertile earth known as “black soil.”

So in March 2020, as a condition for a \$5 billion IMF loan supported by Zelensky, Washington, the EU and Western corporations, an economically desperate Ukraine enacted law 552-IX, which amended the country’s laws on conditions of turnover of agricultural land.

BlackRock is the world’s largest asset manager and a company which has big interests in Raytheon, Lockheed, Dupont and Haliburton, companies responsible for destroying Indigenous lands, climate change, supplying weapons of mass destruction for U.S. endless wars, and helping to push World War III.

Now BlackRock is in a close partnership with Kiev, managing billions of dollars in investments to tear away any last shred of Ukraine’s economic sovereignty, while it pretends to be acting in defense of the Ukrainian people’s interests. 🇺🇦

# Cases reopened: Maryland’s former chief medical examiner covered up police killings

By Lev Koufax

A little over two years ago, David Fowler stepped onto the witness stand during the prosecution of George Floyd’s murderers, including Derek Chauvin. The defense called Fowler as an expert witness. His purpose at this trial was simple: to undermine the prosecution’s expert testimony and forensic evidence. As part of his testimony, Fowler asserted that Chauvin’s knee on the neck of George Floyd was not a significant factor in Floyd’s death.

The prosecution of Floyd’s murderers was the most closely followed and widely broadcast since O.J. Simpson’s trial in 1995. The spotlight certainly shone brightly on Fowler as he attempted to discredit mountains of evidence pointing toward an obvious conclusion, that Derek Chauvin was and is a racist murderer.

Not only did the trial result in the conviction of Chauvin, but it also sparked a new interest in Fowler’s 19-year tenure as Maryland’s Chief Medical Examiner. For this reason, Struggle – La Lucha and Peoples

Power Assembly demanded that the Maryland government reopen the cases where David Fowler, or his subordinates, conducted the autopsy.

PPA and Struggle-La Lucha were and are concerned with the Black men who died in police custody in Maryland. Fowler’s time as the Maryland Chief Medical Examiner did not go without controversy, even before he rose to national prominence in 2020.

Fowler’s administration received heavy public criticism for the conclusions rendered in the autopsies of Anton Black, Marlyn Barnes, and Tyrone West, all young Black men who died under suspicious circumstances while in the custody of Maryland law enforcement. Fowler and his fellow medical examiners entirely absolved police and correctional officers of any responsibility for the deaths of West, Black, and Barnes, regardless of the plentiful evidence suggesting otherwise. Both families accused Fowler’s office of rubber-stamping police theories and covering up racist policing practices.

## Fowler’s cases reopened

In December of 2021, it was widely reported that the Maryland attorney general’s office was reexamining the findings of David Fowler in the cases of over 1,300 individuals who died while in the custody of Maryland police or corrections.

Since that time, the investigation has escalated. Just over a week ago, the Maryland AG announced that 100 autopsies conducted by Fowler’s administration would be thoroughly audited to determine their veracity and thoroughness.

It is important to understand that Fowler is not the only person impli-

cated in this saga. The recent spotlight on his tenure as Maryland’s Chief Medical Examiner demonstrates a deeper racism at the core of the U.S. court system. Dozens of medical examiners, all physicians, served under Fowler while he ran the department. Fowler was one official. To make his racist collaboration with law enforcement sustainable, he would have needed subordinates who agreed with his vision. Otherwise, the Maryland AG’s office would not have raised eyebrows on over 100 autopsies, an incredibly huge number of cases to reopen, and still probably not enough.

The depth of corruption and racism within the U.S. “criminal justice” system cannot be understated. This system must be dismantled and replaced with true community control of the police and courts.

Justice for Tyrone West, Anton Black, and Marlyn Barnes! Reopen all the cases! No more racist medical examiners! 🇺🇦





# En Puerto Rico, gobierno a espaldas del pueblo

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Cuando el pueblo no sabe de las infinitas injusticias, criminales, que el sistema colonial comete contra él, no hay forma de que pueda responder adecuadamente.

Y en Puerto Rico, la falta de transparencia en sus operaciones, tanto del gobierno local como del invasor yanqui, es la norma. Esto ha sido resultado en parte del proceso neoliberal de “reducir el gobierno” y así todas las agencias del gobierno, incluyendo las fiscalizadoras, están inhabilitadas de operar adecuadamente por falta de fuerza trabajadora. Es interesante que la única agencia del gobierno que más o menos funciona bien es la Forense!

Así que esta semana, el Centro de Periodismo Investigativo, que continuamente monitorea las operaciones del gobierno, fue al Tribunal Supremo de los EUA, para la vista más reciente de su demanda contra la Junta de Control Fiscal que el Congreso EUA impuso en PR. Exigen lo que normalmente es un derecho del pueblo, la información de sus quehaceres que impactan la vida de todas las personas en PR.

Pero la Junta ha tratado de impedir

la publicación de sus documentos, correos y cualquier clase de comunicación. Han operado a espaldas del pueblo imponiendo los presupuestos y regulaciones de los servicios esenciales del pueblo a la vez que rehúsan designar lo que son Servicios Esenciales para así impedir que las leyes internacionales y locales sobre Justicia Social sean un obstáculo para sus recortes.

La decisión de la Corte se espera para el verano. Mientras tanto, solo las organizaciones de base del pueblo son las que se dan a la tarea de supervisar y exponer la incompetencia criminal del gobierno, desde la falta de escuelas, hasta la destrucción del medioambiente.

Este es el comienzo de este nuevo año donde se siente la calma que se experimenta antes de una fuerte tormenta, de un período de fuertes luchas.

Pero la reacción debe ser cuidadosamente estratégica para que el resultado sea una victoria del pueblo.

Y nos toca a las personas, organizaciones y partidos de izquierda asumir esa tarea. Difícil, pero es el único camino a la victoria porque solo el pueblo salva el pueblo. 📌



## DÍA DE REYES EN PUERTO RICO



Los Reyes modernos: Ramón Emeterio Betances, Eugenio María de Hostos y Pedro Albizu Campos.

Arte: Pablo Marciano García

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Hay una campaña publicitaria sobre Puerto Rico donde se indica que tenemos las Navidades más largas del mundo, y en parte es así. Se celebran desde el último jueves de noviembre hasta mediados de enero.

Sin embargo, a pesar de que en Nochebuena y Navidad hay cenas criollas, intercambio de regalos y todo tipo de celebración con familiares y amistades, es el 6 de enero, en la Fiesta de los Reyes Magos que en nuestro país se fortalecen las tradiciones y costumbres boricuas.

El colonialismo yanqui nos ha contaminado de costumbres tan foráneas a nuestra historia y cultura, que en pleno trópico, se reproducen escenas con nieve artificial y el consabido Santa Clós rubio y redondo.

Pero el Día de Reyes surge la calidez de nuestro pueblo, el orgullo de tocar y cantar nuestra música, de ser nosotras y nosotros mismos y no la imagen gringa que han querido imponer desde su invasión en 1898.

Y aunque su origen es religioso, de tiempos del colonialismo español, ahora se ha convertido en fiesta de Resistencia al invasor estadounidense. Tanto es así que se ha propagado la imagen de los Tres Reyes con las caras de Ramón Emeterio Betances, padre de la patria y líder del Grito independentista de Lares, Eugenio María de Hostos, independentista y educador que apoyó la independencia de Cuba, y Pedro Albizu Campos, líder independentista del Partido Nacionalista conocido como El Maestro.

Ahora en Puerto Rico, el Día de Reyes y los días siguientes, son realmente una fiesta de reafirmación boricua.

¡Muchas felicidades para la audiencia y fuerzas renovadas para seguir la lucha y vencer!



Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.

## WAR ON RAILROAD WORKERS

Continued from page 7

ed by “short lines,” which are often non-union.

**Take over the railroads!**

No one should have expected “Amtrak Joe” in the White House to help railroad workers. Biden was a loyal servant of the DuPont dynasty for 36 years as a U.S. senator from Delaware.

He collaborated with the super-racist Strom Thurmond to fight school integration. Biden pushed through legislation that helped increase the prison population to more than two million poor people.

Railroad management contin-

ues to push for one-person crews. The runaway train that exploded in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, in 2013, killing 47 people, had just one crew member.

Yet the mere threat of a strike forced both the Union Pacific and CSX railroads to slightly modify their severe attendance policies.

As Frederick Douglass declared, “If there is no struggle there is no progress.”

One sign of a new spirit among railroad workers is the election of Eddie Hall as president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, part of the Teamsters. Hall opposed the agreement that was forced on railroaders.

Any action by railroad workers will be welcomed by the multinational working class. It will inspire millions as the Black Lives Matter movement has.

The railroad monopolies do not only owe sick days and respect. They owe reparations.

Nine thousand miles of track in the South were laid by enslaved Africans before the Civil War. Thousands of additional miles were built by Black prisoners afterward. The

steel-driving man, John Henry, was worked to death by the Chesapeake and Ohio, now part of CSX.

General George Custer had it coming, and he died for the Northern Pacific — now owned by Warren Buffett’s BNSF — that was invading Lakota Sioux land.

Railroads are a vital public utility like electricity, gas, and water. All these utilities need to be taken over by the people.

Source: CovertAction Magazine

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